

# Concept Of The Self (Ego) Exemplified In “The Secrets Of The Self” (Asrar-I-Khudi) Of Iqbal

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## Abstract

The word ‘Ego’ is called ‘Self’. In Persian this ego and self means ‘khudi’. Khudi is not an Islamic word, nor derived from Islamic philosophy. For Iqbal, it is like a mantra of action for any human being or nation to succeed. Iqbal has very much belief on one’s ego and self or we can say Khudi. He believes in action and continuous struggle. Khudi is like a universal message not only for Indians but also for the human beings of the whole world. Iqbal stopped considering himself a poet to his mind, he became a messenger who used his poetry to awaken humanity to know that why they are in this world, he used his philosophy to get people understand that why God created them. In order to do this, he made the concept of Khudi, a unique and complete conception of personality.

**Keywords:** Philosophy, Ego, Personality, Human, Self, Concept.

## INTRODUCTION

The present paper entitled as ‘Concept of the Self (ego) exemplified in *The Secrets of the Self (Asrar-i-Khudi)* of Iqbal’. The basic aim is to explain about the Concept of Self as given by Iqbal in his book. The main intention of the present work is to make an inclusive investigation regarding the Concept of the Self (ego) illustrated in Iqbal’s book along with the over all assessment of his position as a great poet among other philosophers and thinkers of the world.

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, a great legendary figure of the East and one of the most renowned philosophers of the twentieth century. Iqbal is among India’s first patriotic poets, whom Sarojini Naidu called the ‘Poet laureate of Asia’, remains a controversial figure in the history of the Indian subcontinent. In his own period, Iqbal’s towering genius is rightly recognized by another genius born of Indian soil, first Nobel Laureate of Asia, Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore said of Iqbal: ‘India just can not afford Iqbal was a leading spiritual catalyst for the Muslims in the continent of Asia. He was one of the eminent poet and Islamic writer of the Indian subcontinent and has received attention from various poets, translators and critics in the west as well as in the east. He is commonly referred by the name of ‘Allama Iqbal’. The single best known fact about Iqbal is that he composed the ghazal-anthem Sarre Jahan se Acha, declaring (in translation) ‘our homeland is Hindustan’.

Iqbal’s poetical works have been translated into foreign languages, including English, Czech, Russian, German, Arabic and Turkish. It was in 1922, King George granting him the title ‘Sir’. Iqbal in his poetry constantly provides the Muslims glimpses their true Mission and destiny. In the texture of Iqbal’s poetry and prose, the entire experience of the Muslims is reflected. He guided them in his works that Muslims had not merely to escape the prison of Muslim history and to enter the original dynamism of the Qur’anic message, and then the modern world, not as strangers but as “liberating conquerors,” in line with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh). Iqbal, in his all works put a purpose before him and it was a high purpose. In his whole life Iqbal worked hard to make others feel and see what he saw and felt. In his philosophy and poetry he devoted himself to elucidating the real meaning of the great culture and spiritual heritage of man.

## The Philosophical basis of the Secrets of the Self

Muhammad Iqbal expresses philosophy in his famous philosophical poem as *The Secrets of the Self*, his basic and necessary fact of the universe. All life is individual; there is no such thing as universal life, God himself is an individual; He is the most unique individual. The universe is an association of individuals. But it must add that the method and adjustment which is found in this connection is not eternally achieved and completed in it.

Nobody knows the complete truth about the world, that the world has not yet become ‘whole’. The formation of the creation is going on, and man is also taking his share in it. The Quran indicates the possibility of other creators than God. Meaning that “Blessed is God, the best of those who create.” (Quran ch. 23, v. 14)

“Obviously, this view of man and the universe is opposed to that of the English Neo- Hegelians as well as to all forms of Pantheistic Sufism which regard absorption in a universal life or soul as the final aim and salvation of man” (Islam and Mysticism). The Prophet (pbuh) said, ‘Create in our self the symbol and characteristics of God.’ Man is thus the most unique individual in the universe and who among them comes nearest to the God is the complete man. Iqbal writes:

My own age does not understand my deep meanings,  
My Joseph is not for sale in this market

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But my dew is storm- ridden, like the ocean.

*(The Secrets of the Self, 19)*

Iqbal made the concept of Khudi, a unified and comprehensive concept of personality. This becomes Iqbal's main contribution to the world of thoughts. The Persian word 'Khudi' means 'Ego' or 'Self'. For Iqbal, the word self is neither related to Islam nor derived from Islamic philosophy. For Iqbal, this word came to be a mantra of action for any person or country to achieve and get success. This was his message to the whole world. He always believed in action and struggle. Khudi is Iqbal's universal message. It is not only for Indians or Pakistanese; it is for the entire world.

According to Iqbal individual self 'contains the sentiments of personal life, and is therefore, a section of the system of reflection. Every rhythm of thought, existing or demising, is an indivisible unity, which knows and recollects... Inner experience is the ego at work'. (*Pilgrimage of Eternity*) We appropriate the ego itself in the act of identifying, examining, and consenting. Iqbal was of the opinion that a fully developed ego is able to regain self- possession, even in the direct contact with All- embracing Ego (God).<sup>25</sup> An individual's ego i.e. self is related to God's Ego. The role of self is constructive in this universe and it fights against the destructive forces, self is a part of the society of mankind.

For Iqbal the soul is 'Pure self-consciousness perfect otherness- it relates itself to itself and is therefore specified and fixed, it is other life and life for self, and in this determinateness or in its self- externalization, remains within itself.'*(Introduction to the Secrets of the Self)*

Iqbal dreams of a world ruled by religion and not by politics and he strongly condemns Mechiavelli that worship of false gods, which has blinded so many. In his book, he preaches it with a burning sincerity. This book deals with the life of the Muslim individual, the latter with the life of Islamic Community. He sees the Hindu intellectualism and Islamic Pantheism have destructed the capacity for action, he based on scientific observations which distinguishes the western people and especially the English. Now this capacity depends ultimately on the conviction that Khudi (selfhood, personality, individuality,) is real and not the illusion of mind.

Iqbal therefore, throws himself with all his might against idealistic philosophers and psuedo- mystical poets, the poet in his opinion, of the decay prevailing in Islam, and argues that only by self- affirmation, self- development can the Muslims once again become free and strong.

### **The Ego and Continuation of Personality**

Iqbal's thoughts and works focus on the ideas of the development of an individual, or the progress of the "Self" or ego. Iqbal emphasized that Ego is the root of all existence .The ego of an individual or we can say 'I' has the capacity of attaining continuation as factor in the organization of the universe. The Self can elaborate progress and became successful as well as decrease and unsuccessful. The holy Qur'an describes these two mentioning things as follows: "The one who causes this (self) to grow in purity has indeed attained success and the one who is negligent of this (self) has indeed utterly failed."(Quran)

The Ego attains freedom by the removal of all obstruction in its way. It is partly free, partly determined, and reaches fuller to freedom by approaching the individual who is the most free-God. In one word, life is an endeavour for freedom.

The Ego and continuation of Personality: In an individual, the centre of life becomes an Ego or person. Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue. Since Personality or the state of tension, is the most valuable achievement of man. He should see that he doesn't regress to a state of relaxation. That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal.

Thus, the idea of personality gives us a standard of value; it settles the problem of good evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it, is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the stand point of personality. Iqbal believes that the ultimate end of all human activity is life.

In an individual the main motive of life becomes an Ego or person. Personality is kind of pressure or apprehension that can endure only if that condition is well- kept. If the apprehension is not continued, recreation will go on. Since personality is the most precious accomplishment of a human being, he must perceive that he does not resume to a state of recreation.

### **The Self is strengthened by Love**

Love of God at last becomes wholly God.  
eye in the field of Love  
delight.

I sowed mine  
And reaped a harvest of

*(The Secrets of the Self 36.41)*

Iqbal's philosophy clearly depicts the issues of the development of an individual, or the heights of the "Self" or "ego". According to Iqbal, 'Self is the root of all existence' an essence that might appear as fading but also that can achieve perennality. The Self or the human ego has the capacity of attaining stability. The ego can emerge, develop, and success and also can fail and weak and degenerate. Love is one of the most important factors which fortify the human self or khudi or personality.

According to Iqbal, the ego is fortified by love (*Ishq*). This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them. Love is individual's beloved. The effort it realizes the most unique individuality individualizes the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker. To Iqbal, it is the faculty – 'Love' that distinguishes man from other beings, 'Ishq', he thinks, is a source of knowledge and a creative force and it is the only 'Ishq' which is capable of knowing real time and participating in its creative activity.

Iqbal maintains that the ego is the seat of *Ishq* and is ontologically prior to space and time. Iqbal describes the connection between the Love and ego in his philosophical poem, *The Secrets of the Self*: The luminous poet whose name is the self, is the life – spark beneath our dust. By love it is made more lasting, more living, more burning, more glowing. From Love proceed the radiance of its being, and the development of its unknown possibilities. Love is not born of water and air and earth. Be a lover constant in devotion to the beloved that thou mayst cast know and capture God. (*The Secrets of the Self*, 37)

Hence, According to him, *Ishq* is the dynamic force behind every action of the world. *Ishq* as the love of God was firmly believed by Iqbal in the first period of his philosophy of God that is from 1901-1908 when God was conceived by him as Eternal Beauty. He also agrees the sovereignty of *Ishq* which rules both the worlds. He further explains in his writing that 'Ishq' possesses a daring nature even death can't frighten, and too the nature of *ishq* is very daring, it proceeds onwards despite all risks and difficulties.

## CONCLUSION

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal was an eminent poet, philosopher and one of the most notable thinkers of the Indian-subcontinent. He expressed his philosophical ideas through his famous Persian poetical work "*The Secrets of the Self*". His philosophical interest was not restricted to the Indian soil but also rapidly extended all over Muslim world. It is also fact that his philosophical influence has fascinated a good agreement of Western philosophers.

Iqbal was a passionate theorist and his name is still reputable in the 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers. He is the only Islamic philosopher to make a serious attempt at grabbing with the problems of modern western philosophy within an Islamic context.

The greatness of Iqbal lies in the fact that he has studied fully Islamic and non- Islamic philosophical systems and presented a composite system of life. Iqbal is an Indian Muslim, during his stay in the west, he studied also modern philosophy. Since then he has developed a philosophy of his own, for this he takes a more dangerous course and aims at the heart. Many contemporary philosophers prefer to avoid the word 'self' altogether. Some thinkers have doubted and even denied the existence of the self.

The most stupendous feature of Iqbal's message to the people of Asia particularly to the Indians is to give precedence to action over abstract thinking. He tells us message through the medium of his poems that life is not to be contemplative but to be assertive. His denunciation of capitalism and western materialism also appealed to the most Indians of his day.

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